A 000 609 937 8
UC SOUTHERN REGIONAL LIBRARY FACILITY

MEMOIR
OF
LEONICE MARSTON SAMPSON
MOULTON
1898

UCSB LIBRARY
X-55309

Mrs. Mary Ann Dyer

with the regards of

Jno. Ordronaux.

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2007 with funding from
Microsoft Corporation

http://www.archive.org/details/memoirofleonicem00ordriala

MEMOIR

— OF —

LEONICE MARSTON SAMPSON MOULTON

READ AT THE REQUEST OF THE OLD COLONY
HISTORICAL SOCIETY AT TAUNTON,
MASS., JULY 2, 1897

By JOHN ORDRONAUX

Reprinted from Vol. VI. of its Collections.

TAUNTON, MASS.
C. A. HACK & SON, PRINTERS
1898

A MEMOIR OF
LEONICE MARSTON SAMPSON MOULTON.

READ AT THE REQUEST OF THE OLD COLONY HISTORICAL SOCIETY AT TAUNTON, MASS., JULY 2, 1897,

BY JOHN ORDRONAUX.

The record of every life that has achieved its highest ends adds an instructive chapter to the history of human character. Nor does it matter what was the sphere of its activity, so long as that activity was marked by originality and virtue. Mankind instinctively admire courage and Faith as among the masterly motives to action, and as instinctively accord them the homage of their praise, because of their uplifting influence upon the conduct of others. Fortunate in these respects, in the subject of my memoir, I am here to perform a most grateful task. And I discharge it all the more pleasantly, because done in the presence of those to whom I am about to unfold the character of one born upon their own soil, reared beneath the same skies, and fostered by the same stern discipline, which, from the earliest times, has imparted to New England character its grandeur and enduring strength. I am here to sketch a life whose incidents, while not belonging to the higher fields of public action in literature, science

or political economy, may yet serve "to point a moral, or adorn a tale," as an object lesson of sterling merit crowned by sterling virtues.

The habit of attributing eminence in character to men alone, because implying physical strength, and refusing it to women in general, because possessed by them in an inferior degree, needs serious revision when practiced as a standard of measure in the sphere of moral action. Too little credit is apt to be given to women for the possession of that lonely courage, which watches and weeps in silence beside the cradle or the sick couch, uncheered by the hope of coming relief, or social applause. No civic honors await their patient, grief-shadowed achievements. Alone, and unsupported, except by religious faith, their names are written on a more imperishable record than any traced by human hands. There are women everywhere whose heroic deeds would ennoble any estate, how ever high, yet who pass unrecorded in song or story, because performed in the field of obscure domestic retirement. Our American homes have furnished many notable instances of the height and dignity to which female character can rise in the free air of republican society. But it is chiefly in the domestic life of the descendants of the Pilgrim fathers that have been found the best examples of those heroic qualities which have instilled courage and daring into American manhood, and enabled it to carry the Bible and spelling book, the church and the schoolhouse, from Massachusetts Bay to the distant shores of the Pacific.

The record to be offered you is that of a brave nature, representative of those vigorous elements which would give eminence to the character of any man, and should much more to that of a woman. Yet I bring you only a character sketch,

rather than an expanded biography. For after all that may be said or done, character is the one supreme element in every human life. Of all worldly things but this, we are only stewards and beneficiaries. Treasures of silver and gold—exalted rank—social position with its vantage grounds of opportunity —all these we part with at the grave. Character alone, is the single possession we own—ours to keep—ours to control—ours to carry into the life to come.

There died at Roslyn, New York, on the thirteenth of January last, a woman of remarkable character. She was a member of this Society, enthusiastic in her devotion to its interests, and with a high degree of reverence for the history of the Old Colony, as embodying that of the founders of our republic. Her patriotism went back to the Mayflower and the Rock, and continued a beacon light of inspiration and hope throughout life. It is, therefore, but an act of justice to her worth to place this tribute of remembrance among the annals of our honored names. Had she been born in the purple, her hands were fitted to wield the rod of authority. Had her destiny devoted her to a literary or scientific career, she would have graced either, equally well. She was fitted for high achievement in any field open to the powers of her sex. Descended from a sturdy New England stock, she was a plain, un-crowned American woman, strong of mind, and fashioned out of that sterner stuff of colonial times which made her a shining representative of the best results of her early religious and social training. Born in the youth of a century of unparalleled progress and development, she lived almost to witness its triumphant ending.

In these respects, her life covered one of the most important epochs of our national history: that portion known as its

constitutional period. Beginning with the decisions of our greatest Chief Justice Marshall, relaying the foundations of our organic law, it passed through the stormy days of the Missouri Compromise, the Tariff of 1828, and the subsequent Nullification Ordinance of 1832; the removal of the deposits from the United States Bank, thence through the mighty Civil War for the restoration of the Union, down to its concluding chapters at Gettysburg and Appomattox. Such a period of continuous strain upon the life of a nation, and upon the self-defensive powers of Federal government, no American citizen, let us hope, will ever again witness. It was the period of crystallization of all the elements which entered into the formation of state sovereignty within a federal Union, and of all the dangers which could threaten its peaceful administration in public council-chambers, or assail its national existence on the battlefield.

And what changes did she not live to see in the social life of New England, changes resulting from altered material conditions, which have lifted many household burthens that the mothers of former times bore without a murmur. All these changes have worked themselves into the moral character of the people, and, by comparison with that of their ancestors, have lowered in many ways the former standard of self-reliance and personal independence. The arts of luxury have rapidly crept into our home education, bringing with them the taste for easy living and indolent occupations. Our common schools teach many unnecessary branches that tend to foster pride and to develop a self-esteem that creates exaggerated distinctions between brain labor and hand labor. It was not thus in the early days of our century, when every fresh necessity had to be met by a fresh application of

personal exertion; when troops of mechanical agencies were not yet enlisted in the service of mankind, and both men and women toiled in the old Biblical way for their portion of daily bread. Every New England home was then a hive of busy laborers, contributing to form that character for the Commonwealth which has become the national synonym of indomitable energy and ceaseless thrift.

The subject of this memoir was born at a time also when, literally speaking,

"The busy housewife plied her evening care."

When women wove and spun garments for the household; when wives could tend the cradle, or spread the table, or prepare the food of their husbands, without feeling that they were performing servile tasks. And she lived through that transitional period in our history which saw the introduction of new manners bringing with them a weaker sense of domestic duty. She saw the original American matron in her prime, and saw her gradually changing into an invalid lady, perpetually leaning upon the services of an attendant maid, and shifting the sacred burthen of rearing her children to the shoulders of an imported servant. What a contrast between this and the home life of those mothers whose sons stood by the old Concord Bridge and on Lexington Green at the opening chapter of American independence. What a contrast between this and the life of the mothers who gave us a Daniel Webster, a Benjamin Franklin, and, later on, a Ulysses Grant and an Abraham Lincoln!

And what other changes did she not witness in the religious life of New England, starting from the time when the Sabbath began on Saturday evening, and secular labor and

children's sports and profane reading were alike forbidden; when the tithing man was abroad in the highway to check all idle travelling on the Lord's day; when the young people scampered home at the ringing of the curfew, for fear of being punished for keeping late hours; when the priesthood of New England still retained its majestic Biblical name and character, and was the informing spirit in directing public opinion, acting even as counsellors to the civil authority; when little children paused in their out-door gambols and stood reverently, with bowed heads, as the Man of God passed by; when towns raised taxes to support the preaching of the Gospel, and church membership was esteemed an essential part of good citizenship; when, in fact, the principles of the Puritan Commonwealth had not yet expired as a rule of conduct for the community.

The character I bring you is one therefore of the olden time, and shines all the more brightly by contrast with the environment in which she lived, remaining untouched and unaltered amid all changes of circumstances, and clinging loyally, through her long pilgrimage of eighty-five years, to whatsoever things were true; to whatsoever things were honest; to whatsoever things were just and of good report in the example left by her forefathers.

Mrs. Leonice Marston Sampson Moulton, daughter of Leonice Holmes and Marston Sampson, and a descendant in the seventh generation of Elder Brewster and Myles Standish, was born in Plymouth, Mass., on the 15th of September, 1811. In those days it was still the old Plymouth of the fathers, with a lingering flavor of colonial times clinging to its houses and people. It was still the old historic Plymouth, where religious interests occupied a prominent part in shaping

the policy of government and in forming private manners. Her grandfather's garden ran down to the Town brook at the foot of Watson's Hill, and was the spot where tradition said that Massasoit had made his first treaty of peace with the colonists; and hard by was Bradford's spring, and Burial Hill, the resting place of the fathers; and all about her were relics of those whose hands had wrought out in Church and State that intellectual enfranchisement represented by a free church — free speech — a free press — and free schools. It was something to remember, to have been born in the very cradle of New England history, and to have been nursed amid its ennobling memories. It was something to have spent one's childhood where events had occurred destined to form a ground-work for the canvas of the painter and the contemplation of the political philosopher. It was, indeed, a rare privilege to have trodden the very ground trodden by the feet of apostolic men, bearing, in all their labors and in all their triumphs, a pre-destined message of political freedom to millions yet unborn.

There are sacred places in human history; places consecrated by events that were not born of the will of man, nor executed by his unaided efforts. There are places made sacred by the blood of martyrs, whose hearts were laid as a living sacrifice upon the altar of God's purposes, in order that

> "Men may rise on stepping stones
> Of their dead selves, to higher things."

Not to be able to read the underlying meaning of such spots, or to respond to their inspiring memories, is to live outside the region of all high ideals; outside the region of the soul.

I pity the man who could stand on Mars Hill where Paul

preached, or in the Coliseum of Rome where an innumerable army of martyrs suffered, and yet feel no sense of overpowering awe and reverent worship, possessing his whole being.

I pity the American who can stand on the shores of Plymouth Bay and see nothing to move his feelings beyond the beauties of nature. I pity him whose dull vision cannot penetrate beyond the color-effects of its landscape to read the spiritual significance of a spot on which the hand of God had written a new Gospel of civil liberty for the future destiny of mankind. I cannot speak for others here, but as for her whose character I am sketching, the memory of this birthright was an ever living incentive to love of country.

She lost both her parents when very young and was left to the care of her grandmother and uncle, the late Schuyler Sampson, of Plymouth. Her first instruction was acquired at the hands of Mrs. Mary Dexter, wife of Rev. Elijah Dexter of Plymouth, and sister of Gov. Marcus Morton of Taunton, who received her into her family as a pupil and instructed her along with her son Nathaniel. Mrs. Dexter was a representative wife of the New England clergy of that day. She had the talents and firmness of character necessary to fulfill the many sided duties of her station, together with a sympathetic nature that expended itself in a tender, maternal solicitude towards those entrusted to her care. The impress of her guidance left an imperishable influence upon the character of her pupils, who carried with them through life the practice of those Puritan virtues which distinguished their beloved teacher. Down to the day of her death, Mrs. Moulton did not cease to acknowledge her childhood's debt to Mrs. Dexter, nor to emulate in her own life the wise teachings of

this saintly guide. Reverting with undiminished reverence and gratitude to her maternal care, she was ever ready to re-iterate the priceless value of the instruction and example set before her in that christian home.

From this household of faith her young pupil went out to become a student at the Bristol Academy in Taunton, residing with her uncle, Roswell Ballard, one of the deacons of the Congregational church. Nothing noteworthy appears to have occurred during this formative period of her character beyond the exhibition of a growing love of adventure and of religious inquiry into denominational differences.

In 1832 Mrs. Moulton, then Miss Sampson, joined the family of Hon. Francis Baylies, recently appointed by President Jackson Chargé d' Affaires to the Argentine Republic, and sailed with them in the U. S. sloop of war Peacock for Buenos Ayres.

Mr. Baylies' mission was a secret one, covering important claims of American citizens, which arose out of transactions occurring during the pendency of questions of disputed sovereignty over the Falkland Islands between Great Britain and the Argentine Republic. He was entrusted with this delicate duty because of his intimate relations to President Jackson, with whom he had served in Congress. The character of its importance may be inferred from the fact that the records of the State Department show that his despatches were never made public.*

---

* DEPARTMENT OF STATE.

WASHINGTON, June 10, 1897.

JOHN ORDRONAUX, Esq.

Sir: In reply to your letter of the 8th inst., I have to say that Francis Baylies was appointed Chargé d' Affaires of the United States near the Government of the Argentine Republic, Jan. 3, 1832. It does not appear that his dispatches have ever been published.

Respectfully yours,

WM. H. MICHAEL,
Chief Clerk.

The secret of their contents remains buried in its archives. We only know from his diary, now in the possession of this Society, that his mission proved a failure.

At that day, when steamships were as yet unknown, a three months' voyage in order to reach one's destination was a common chapter in ocean navigation. Hence, sailing from Boston in March, and touching at the Azores and Rio de Janeiro, it was only in the middle of June that the party arrived at Buenos Ayres. With a keen observation and all-embracing appreciation of the novelties of this voyage, Miss Sampson kept a diary of daily experiences. This record of events fairly rivaled the ship's log in nautical details, while overpeering it in matters of personal and international history gathered at the Azores, Rio de Janeiro, Monte-Video and Buenos Ayres. She studied navigation and kept abreast of the officers in their daily reckoning of the ship's course and progress. Alive to every new feature of the voyage — whether in studying nautical manœuvres, whether in following the changing constellations that mark the dividing line between the northern and southern hemispheres, whether studying men or manners in foreign lands — everywhere, her quick eye and retentive memory caught the spirit and moving incidents of the scene and stamped them in ineffaceable characters. Even in extreme age, her powers of description and vivid reproduction of those incidents, with all the accessories of color, form and dramatic proportion, were a source of never-ending wonder to strangers as well as to friends. Nor was this rare faculty limited to the impressionable period of youth, but it continued in active existence throughout life.

During the period of Mr. Baylies' stay in Buenos Ayres, Miss Sampson acted as his confidential secretary, occupying

in this respect a closer relation than that of his secretary of Legation. The mission of our minister was a particularly delicate one at that time, owing to the unsettled state of the Argentine government under the arbitrary rule of President Rosas, soon after to become its Dictator. In common with most South American republics, frequent overturnings of established government, bringing with them constant dangers of civil war, kept up a state of perpetual unrest. Rival factions contended for the sovereignty, and each sought assistance at the hands of foreign nations. All patriotism was sunk in the greed of political power. In one feature alone both parties agreed, which was in the great severity displayed towards political opponents. Extreme measures of cruelty, whether against persons or property, were the ready engines of oppression; and strangers, though but mechanically entangled in the civil dissensions of the day, were exposed to similar risks as native opponents. Arrests of American citizens were constantly threatened, according as they were charged with taking sides, and our Consul, Mr. Slocum, had been compelled to seek an asylum at the Legation, where he remained the guest of Mr. Baylies for several weeks without daring to step outside of its inviolable limits. Much of the correspondence incident to the various questions of international law arising out of these local complications came under the eye of Miss Sampson, who was thus made acquainted with the arts and procedure of diplomacy in problems of contentious jurisdiction over rights of territorial sovereignty and asylum; of commercial intercourse between foreigners during changes of government; as also with the juridical bases upon which public claims could be promoted. To a young woman of such keen perceptions and overflowing

activity, this was a field full of dramatic incidents. Every day brought its changes of aspect in this tournament of negotiation, where cunning and duplicity were habitually resorted to as justifiable weapons. Experiences like these instructed her in the use of the pen, and in the art of legal composition, and prepared her, as few of her years were prepared, to deal with the practical problems of life in a thorough, persevering manner.

She was absent nearly a year on this mission, meanwhile visiting Monte Video and Rio de Janeiro, and returned home in the U. S. sloop of war Warren, arriving at Baltimore in January, 1833. From there she went to Washington, where she spent the entire winter and spring.

Subjects of great importance were then in the air; subjects which foreshadowed trials to the Republic never before encountered. Those were the early days of Nullification, with all its attendant threats of secession. President Jackson had also startled the country by his determined warfare upon the United States Bank, a step which unsettled our finances and brought on a disastrous commercial crisis. These two subjects, the former of which was eventually the precursor of our Civil War, gave rise to acrimonious debates in both branches of Congress, and brought to the front the best talent of the nation. Miss Sampson was a frequent attendant upon them, and was present at many a political tournament between such masters of eloquence as Clay, Webster, Calhoun and McDuffie. Her analysis of their relative powers and skill in the arts of controversial speech — of the manner and tone with which each combatant presented his case or made his reply, the salient points around which the hottest contest was waged, and the effect of such varying tides of

battle upon the minds of the audience — her description of those scenes was extremely felicitous. These famous debates, which have come down to us among the classics of American eloquence, served as another school in which to sharpen her faculties and to strengthen the ground-work of her judgment. Although neither at Buenos Ayres nor at Washington could she be said to have strictly studied law, yet there was a sufficient introduction given her of its leading principles to broaden her mind in its best uses.

A few months after her return, on the 4th of June, 1833, she was married at Providence, R. I., to Joseph W. Moulton of New York, a former judge of its Supreme Court as then organized. Mr. Moulton was the author of a History of New York during the Dutch colonial period; of a Treatise on Chancery Practice, and of an Analysis of American Law. He was a faithful representative of the old chancery lawyer. Keen in discerning the moral aspects of a judicial problem, he was also a man of scholarly tastes, of great industry, and particularly devoted to labors of research in the field of analytical jurisprudence. A few years after his marriage he retired from practice and took up his residence at Roslyn, Long Island, where the remainder of their lives was spent. He died there on the 19th of April, 1875, and was followed by his wife on the 13th of January, 1897.

In 1861 Mrs. Moulton spent six months in Europe, travelling in England and on the continent; and in 1869 she again went abroad with her daughter and grandchildren for the purpose of educating the latter. She was gone a whole year, most of her time being spent in Switzerland. Some letters of hers published in the Waterville Times, of New York, showed that she retained the same keenness of observation

and powers of description which had distinguished her in youth; and a mind still receptive of the beauties of nature, and alive to the historical associations that clustered about people or places. She never needed to use a guide book a second time, nor required a second look at a locality to fix it, with its details, in her memory. Such, in brief, were her intellectual endowments, which shone most conspicuously on the practical side of her active and varied life. She believed in opportunism and adapted herself in conduct to every phase it presented. Objects were estimated according to their present or future utility, and waste and sloth were sins never permitted within her household. The success which usually attended her efforts arose from the fact that she had faith in herself, and never hesitated or wavered in the performance of an action dictated by a sense of duty.

Those who saw her only in the midst of daily cares knew little of some of the best sides of her character. With instinctive sympathy for all who suffered and were wounded in the battle of life, she was a generous and at the same time a wise and discriminating benefactress. When our own Society was struggling to obtain a permanent home she contributed liberally toward that object, and stimulated others to do likewise by her voice and example. Her interest in our success, by aiding us to collect historical material, never suffered abatement. Whatever seemed to belong to the history of the Old Colony she was ever ready to secure for us, and our portrait gallery and our shelves all testify to the zeal with which her labors were performed.

Nor was it alone here that her bounties exhibited themselves. Wherever there was a church in need of assistance, she was quick to respond, as she ever was to the cry of the

sick or the suffering, for she loved the brotherhood as well as the brethren. Each had their place in her affections. The little chapel for the Congregational Church at Plympton, to which she contributed so largely, was intended as a memorial to her father, who had at one time been superintendent of its Sabbath School. She was also one of the founders of the Episcopal Church at Roslyn and of the Congregational Church on its Highlands. Indeed, every benevolent undertaking in her neighborhood, whether library, hospital, home for children, or any other enterprise whose mission was the betterment of the poor or the elevation of society, found a ready helping hand in her.

Her religious convictions, while fixed, were catholic in liberality towards all denominations. Neither the doctrine nor the discipline of any church narrowed her sympathies for other sects. She did not surrender her private judgment to mere doctrinal subscription, because she believed that the oracles of God had not yet ceased to reveal new messages of truth from out His holy word. And she remembered the advice of Robinson to his flock when he said, "If God reveal anything to you by any other instrument of His, be as ready to receive it as ever you were to receive any truth by my ministry."

The religion of conscience illumined by revelation was a sufficient prompter to action, and a sufficient guide in the various paths of generosity and justice which she trod. No collar of servitude confined her steps to a measured tread of prescribed orthodoxy in philanthropy. Every friend, every neighbor, every good work, could claim a response to an appeal, if only just and defensible. Although herself impulsive in temperament, and with feelings easily kindled into

flaming action, her religious duties were always performed with the inherited calmness of her Pilgrim fathers, zealous yet not precipitate, sufficient in energy, yet without effusive sentiment. The early teachings of Mary Dexter were still bearing fruit. Moreover, in the home of her grandmother, Hannah Sampson, and her uncle, Deacon Ballard, she had been equally trained on the strictest lines of Calvinistic orthodoxy. Mrs. Sampson was, like many pious women of her time, a close student of the Bible, and always prepared for an argument on some mooted point of doctrine. She had the fibre of the true martyr, ever ready to testify to a good confession. Scott's Commentary, Faber, Flavel and Baxter were her favorite spiritual guides. These religious works furnished her with materials for expository arguments touching "fate, free-will, foreknowledge absolute," and the future state of the unconverted heathen. Such topics were always in order for purposes of discussion among church members at their interviews; while other topics like regeneration, baptism, and the covenant of grace, she was wont to discuss with her pastor, Rev. Adoniram Judson, father of the distinguished missionary to Burmah.

In those days, pastoral visits consisted for the most part of colloquial reviews of Biblical studies and of personal religious experiences. Whoever could exhibit zeal in reaffirming doctrinal interpretations of the Holy Scriptures was regarded as adding new rivets to the armor-plating of orthodoxy, and proved himself of good standing in the church. Mrs. Sampson was, in this respect, a shining light among church members, being ever ready to take up the sword and buckler of her faith to wage war upon spiritual darkness. It was a season, also, of great religious awakening. The dawn of

foreign missionary enterprise was just breaking upon us. Faber in his work on the Origin of Pagan Idolatry, and Buchanan in his "Star in the East," had stirred up the conscience of Christendom and kindled anew the old crusading spirit. To be a missionary and to carry the Gospel to distant lands in emulation of the Apostles, was deemed the highest exemplification of religious fervor and personal consecration to Christ. These were the topics most commonly discussed by Dr. Judson with his parishioner, and often in the presence of her grandchild. His tales of the wondrous East and of the perilous condition of the heathen destined to eternal perdition, unless saved by uncovenanted grace, inflamed her youthful imagination to such a degree that she begged her grandmother to allow her to go as a missionary, but being told that she was too young to be of any service she took off her necklace of gilt beads and gave them to Dr. Judson, as the only contribution a child could make towards the propagation of the Gospel. Thus early did she disclose that spirit of daring and self-sacrifice which constituted the chief traits in her character.

This atmosphere of spiritual inquiry in which she was steeped thus early was not conducive to the development of a cheerful outlook upon the affairs of life. And the impressions it created, of meeting with nothing but vanity and vexation as our portion here below, were of a character to have inspired permanent religious gloom had not her buoyant nature and later experiences of life dissipated these phantoms of speculative philosophy and self-introspection.

Nevertheless, their moulding effects upon her moral character continued to the very last. They imparted a sternness to her inner life, which seemed at times to be so self-sustain-

ing as to rise above the need of sympathy or human assistance. With indomitable will she could suppress all outward shows of pain or suffering, and when the cup of bitterness was at her lips asked none to share it with her.

This background of self-repression, and stoicism in the midst of suffering, gave support to her religious spirit, which had in it some of the underlying qualities of the Scotch Covenanters, whose "Cloud of Witnesses" has furnished the names of many noble women to that illustrious chapter of Christian Martyrology. Signs were never wanting that the ashes of the old New England orthodoxy were still warm within her soul, and if stirred would give evidence that the fires beneath were not extinguished. She believed, with her fathers, that the church in the apostolic days clothed itself in no external forms of splendor; that the Gospel was originally preached by the lowly in station and in spirit, who loved the services of their Master and brought no ostentatious demeanor into His worship. As a consequence, she did not sympathize with those forms of mechanical devotion into which ritualistic services were too conspicuously introduced; where ceremony overshadowed the essentials of personal participation; or where music or imagery gave a sensuous coloring to moments of adoration. It seemed to her an offence against the sincerity of our devotion to offer bribes to children for attendance upon worship, and a still greater offence to use the church as a commercial play house for spectacular dramas of puerile significance.

In her domestic life she was indefatigable in personal labors. Her stirring temperament called for continuous exertion as a condition of health and mental repose. Ever active and energetic, seeking for more directions in which to expend

herself, she fully exemplified that virtuous housewife described in the 31st Chapter of Proverbs, "who looketh well to the ways of her household and eateth not the bread of idleness;" "who layeth her hands to the spindle and her hands hold the distaff." Idleness, though gilded by prosperity, was to her the greatest of our social sins, because the one most fatal to the growth of those domestic virtues of industry and thrift which should cluster about wifehood and maternity. It was in this forge of self-renunciation and lofty endeavor that were shaped the foundations of her robust character. True, it was tinged at times with a hue of masculinity, but without being robbed of womanly tenderness, for she possessed all the essentials of a high character in the stimulus imparted to her daily conduct by Faith, Hope and Charity.

The combination of such mental and moral qualities made her a conspicuous personality in the community, and impressed even strangers with the feeling that behind her outward qualities there was a reserved and latent force of still higher power and possibilities. In any assemblage of women she would have made her influence felt through a presence combining vivacity with dignity, and an easy self-assurance void of all affectation. It was the force-element impressing itself spontaneously upon every action with the grace of naturalness. She wore the appearance of one born for enterprise and command, and to whom there was no joy equal to that of a victory over obstacles. With an ever-hopeful nature and buoyant feelings that overflowed in manners and conversation, she was an inspiring friend among friends, because of a courage and dash uncommon to women. Popular with the young, whose tastes and pleasures she was

always ready to share, she was never so happy as when rendering a service to the poor or the sick, or defending the cause of the humble and the friendless. There was also a golden thread of patriotism interwoven with her nature. Born among a people who had never bowed the head nor bent the knee to princes or prelates, she was loyal to the core to the institutions of her country and the genius of our form of government. As a natural result of her New England birth-right, she had an inborn repugnance to those artificial distinctions of society which undertake, in a republic, to establish a system of fictitious castes based upon obsolete traditions, or questionable historical claims. The Herald's College was not a place to which she would have gone herself or sent others for information. To her it was only a historical garret and lumber room for collecting the cast-off clothing and mouldering assets of a decayed feudal system. Her Americanism was of that character which no touch of a foreign soil could tarnish or contaminate. Her flag was never lowered to do homage to any other.

Possessed of so vivacious an organization, her exuberant spirits made her recoil from the tame conventional repose of an indoor life. She was neither a sybarite nor a lotus eater. She loved the sunshine and the open air, for sun and wind were to her Nature's chief restoratives. "The breezy call of incense breathing morn" found her alert for the labors of the day. Her feet brushed the early dews that gathered on the lawn. She loved the forest, with its leafy patriarchs, its sounding aisles and its silent mossy glens; and she loved, too, the ocean, with its solemn voice and its "melancholy waste" of waters, unchanged since creation's early dawn. The "innumerable laughter" of its sparkling waves, and the

sullen roar of its awakened tempest, were each to her exhilarating objects, for she could feel the inspiring attitudes of Nature's varying moods, and drank them in with the abounding joy of a true worshipper. She had been, also, a life-long friend of our greatest meditative bard, Bryant, and had trodden with him many spots on the Hampshire hills, where his muse was first kindled into metrical speech. There, were the same over-arching trees of the primeval forest under which the "interior divinity" had moved him to the utterance of Thanatopsis and the Forest Hymn; and there, too, the same lonely road over which, while travelling afoot, he saw the solitary bird which inspired his immortal lines to a Water Fowl.

Her reverence for his muse and her many communings with the "good gray poet" made her delight in all the mysteries of woodcraft, and in all the joys of fellowship with sunshine and flowers. Sister to the Dryads and wood nymphs, she was continually laying new offerings of affection upon their altars. And in return, these sylvan deities repaid her with the freshness of prolonged youth and the buoyancy of a green old age, such as come only to those who live closest to Nature.

If the law of heredity has any meaning, it was well illustrated in the character of this daughter of a Pilgrim ancestry. A descendant of Elder Brewster and Myles Standish, she inherited many of the qualities of both, being capable of summoning them into action according as the occasion demanded.

As historical characters and pillars of State in the Pilgrim colony, no two men could be more dissimilar in organization, or had lived through more varied and dissimilar experiences.

Standish was a soldier "from spur to plume" and had served in foreign wars. By nature he seems to have been of a fiery temper, developed into ruthless daring wherever an occasion demanded aggressive action, coupled with impetuous energy. No carpet knight was he. Diplomacy, with its honeyed words and ambiguous propositions, were not in accord with his feelings. Bluff, honest, emphatic, he was always prepared to take up the material side of any controversy, and had an easy way of clinching an argument with match-lock or sword. Like the war-horse described by Job, "he snuffed the battle from afar."

In striking contrast with this warrior soul stood Brewster, the elegant and refined scholar, the statesman, a man of learning and eminent piety. He had been Secretary of Legation to Queen Elizabeth's ambassador to Scotland and Holland, and was possessed of all the polite arts required for a life at courts. His chief distinction in the colony was due to the example of humility, patience and self-sacrificing endurance which he set to others, in braving unmurmuringly the hardships of its pioneer existence. His character is well summed up by Mr. Baylies in his Memoir of the Colony of New Plymouth by saying that "with the most submissive patience he bore the novel and trying hardships to which his old age was subjected; lived abstemiously, and after having been in his youth the companion of ministers of State, the representative of his Sovereign, familiar with the magnificence of courts, and the possessor of a fortune sufficient not only for the comforts but the elegancies of life, this humble Puritan labored steadily with his own hands in the fields for daily subsistence." The line of succession of these distinguishing traits of the soldier and the scholar could be easily traced in

the character and action of Mrs. Moulton. High spirited, yet self-sacrificing to the degree of humility, she was as brave as the one, as laborious as the other.

The firmness and dauntless courage of the "doughty little captain," the absence of all fear, and faith in one's self under God's decrees, had a conspicuous place in the bosom of his female descendant; and the grace and quiet dignity of the leading Elder of the first church in the colony, with his charm of mien and insinuating manners, were well represented, also, in that daughter of the seventh generation. Therefore was it that in her organization native courage inspired hope; and amid reverses, rose faith in final good. She felt that behind the cloud the sun was still shining, and that the children of the Covenant would not be forsaken in times of need. This faith was strongly exemplified when misfortune overtook her husband and they had to part with a beautiful home adorned by her presence and unbounding hospitality. Instead of being crushed in spirit, she rose to meet the demands of the occasion. It was not in her nature to cringe, or fawn, or take refuge behind borrowed aid. Her sentinel courage never faltered in the presence of a menacing danger. Where others would have retired from view to nurse their wounded pride and shrouded hopes in mawkish concealment, she set herself resolutely to work, believing that Providence helps those who help themselves, and she realized the truth of this unwritten covenant in the prosperity which crowned her labors.

To do her work in the light of day and in the presence of men and angels was the order of her life. It was also the creed of the fathers, to whose formulary she bore allegiance by the testimony of her habitual conduct. The petty trials,

and pin-head troubles under which so many women fall disheartened and succumb, could not touch or affect her robust heart. Life to her was a ceaseless struggle of the spiritual element for the mastery of the field. Every trial, every temptation, whether of the spirit or the flesh, sounded the note of conflict and awoke the joy of battle within her soul. Lion-hearted, she courted the heaviest burdens of the spirit and tossed them off in an ecstacy of self-helpfulness. The iron blood of the old Reformers was in her veins, bringing with it the spirit of the men who had founded the church at Scrooby and Leyden; who had braved wintry seas and the terrors of the wilderness to build a Christian republic in an unknown land. Her strength, like theirs, came from the same source that filled the hearts of the Hebrew prophets with good courage and trust before the sons of men.

Yet with no outward show of religious fervor, there was in her daily life an undercurrent of justice, tempered by charity, which led her to make sacrifices at every call of duty. Patient, painstaking and studious in her cultivation of every phase of thrift, she lived to reap a harvest of satisfaction in the possession of means "to do good and to distribute" with an open hand and a loving, rejoicing heart.

But there was still another side to her character which needs to be known, because furnishing an additional background for the Doric virtues of courage and mastery over circumstances which she possessed. Strange as it may appear to connect it with a woman's nature, yet it was there, deeply implanted, ineradicable, and no other name so fittingly describes it as that of a martial instinct. She was a soldier-woman at heart, with all the dash and daring belonging to that endowment. Whether it came down from Standish, or

that paternal great-grandfather, Zabdiel Sampson*, of Plympton, who fell in battle on Harlem Heights, or of his son William, also a Revolutionary soldier, cannot be told; but it was there as a living, energizing principle, stamped upon her actions in all moments of stirring endeavor. She had spent six months on board a man-of-war on her voyages to and from South America; and the experiences of that life, with its pictured pages of travel in strange lands, of military discipline as an adjunct to the art of war, of diplomatic ceremony as the roadway for the passage of international courtesies and official communications — all these scenes of varied pageantry had touched a sympathetic chord in her heart and left an ineffaceable impress upon her mind.

Fascinated by the novelties of these dramatic incidents so kindred to her tastes, she had assimilated their most salient features, making them part of her many-sided experiences, and by reason of being present at all manœuvres that had about them the pomp and circumstance of mimic warfare, had caught the contagion of its pervading atmosphere. She had sailed under the old Flag into foreign ports, and witnessed the respect shown to it in official salutes and public entertain-

*Zabdiel Sampson was born in Plympton, Mass, April 26, 1727; married Abigail Cushman December 31, 1747. She died May 4, 1751, leaving one child. He married for his second wife Abiah Whitmarsh, Aug. 22, 1752, by whom he had nine children.

His first military service was in the "French War of 1756." From the Revolutionary War Archives of Massachusetts it appears that he enlisted at the outbreak of the Revolution as a private in Capt. John Bradford's Co, in Col. Theophilus Cotton's Regiment which marched on the alarm of April 19, 1775, from Plympton to Marshfield, serving twelve days.

He re-enlisted May 2, 1775, in the same company and regiment, serving three months and seven days. Again enlisted Oct. 7, 1775, in the same company and regiment. He was killed in the battle of Harlem Heights, Sept. 16, 1776, but in what regiment serving the archives above quoted do not show. His third son William also enlisted in 1780, in the Revolutionary Army.

Vol. 11, p. 249; Vol. 14, p. 36; Vol. 56, p. 71.

ments. The sight of it on national anniversaries always awoke a thrill of ardor in her bosom. At home she had one of her own which she loved to display on public days, and whenever any pageant brought forth an array of troops marching to the call of drum and bugle her face became aglow with animation, as though the old blood of the Revolution was rippling afresh in her veins.

At the breaking out of the Civil War, and but a few days after the firing upon Sumter, she started alone for Baltimore to bring her daughter and grandchildren back to the North. It was midnight when she reached the depot in Philadelphia. Not a traveller was to be seen. A conductor informed her that no passengers could be taken; that the railroad was cut to prevent the passage of troops, and the train about to leave would be exclusively occupied by a regiment going to force its way to the national Capital. Not in the least intimidated, she replied that she was going to Baltimore to rescue her children, and if the regiment went through she would go with them, whatever might happen, and she did—a lone woman among a thousand men, going to meet they knew not what of obstacles or armed resistance. Slowly and tardily they made their way without encountering an enemy, but had that regiment been driven into a fight, there would have been found in its ranks another Deborah Sampson, and her chosen place would have been with the color guard.

The law of descent was here re-asserting its unquenchable power. It was the heart of a warrior ancestry beating in the bosom of a woman. Nor, was it with less loyalty to its claims that she annually visited Plymouth Rock to stand with reverent feet upon that Pilgrim shrine, and to bear witness in her own person that she remained the faithful

"remnant of a line
Such as the Doric mothers bore."

Therefore was it that on such an elastic nature age made but little impress. Time touched her lightly, and without extinguishing her youthful feelings. At eighty-five, still lithe in figure, erect in carriage, she walked with the springing step of girlhood, despising those common aids of advanced age — the cushioned chair, the protected corner by the hearth, the staff and the guardian wraps — always happiest when braving the elements outside, that had given her health and prolonged usefulness. The indomitable will, and courage never to submit or yield to circumstances without a struggle for better terms, were as prominent traits as ever. Self-reliant to the last, beyond even the limits of prudence, the very accident which terminated her existence grew out of this spirit of independence and over-activity. Yet not unfitting was her death to the framework of Spartan character in which she had lived. For, when the summons came, it found her untouched and undecayed by the withering hand of disease; like a soldier, still in harness, and on post, and she stepped from Time into Eternity without pain, without premonition or mortal anguish — simply translated — into that higher

"life Elysian,
Whose portal we call Death."

UCSB LIBRARY
X-55389

A 000 609 937 8